

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7547

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 1764

LIMDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS AND AMBASSADOR MAILLIARD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, CI

SUBJECT: CHILE: HUMAN RIGHTS, OASGA

REF: STATE 54857, 55095, SANTIAGO 1734

1. WHEN I SENT SANTIAGO 1734, SUGGESTING THAT WE SHOULD PROPOSE AN INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION VISIT TO CHILE BEFORE THE JUNE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, I HAD NO IDEA OF THE COMMISSION'S DISARRAY. PRESS ACCOUNTS AND DEPTELS REPORT THAT THREE OF THE SEVEN COMMISSION MEMBERS HAVE CRITICIZED THE INERTIA OF THE ORGANIZATION IN DEALING WITH HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN CHILE AND STATED THEY WOULD NOT ACCEPT RE-ELECTION IN JUNE. WHATEVER ORFILA OR OTHERS MAY BE ABLE TO DO TO PUT THE PIECES TOGETHER, I WONDER WHETHER IT IS NOW REASONABLE TO EXPECT ANYTHING MORE IN JUNE THAN A REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION PREPARED ON BASIS OF ITS CURRENT MEETING. WOULD WELCOME YOUR THOUGHTS ON FEASIBILITY OF OUR PROPOSAL IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.

2. IF THE PROPOSAL IS NOW A NON-STARTER, I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO CANVASS OTHER MEANS OF ACCOMPLISHING OUR BASIC PURPOSE. WE CONSIDER THAT PURPOSE TO BE TO OBTAIN A CLEAR
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SIGNAL OF IMPROVEMENT IN CHILEAN GOVERNMENT HUMAN RIGHTS

PRACTICES, PRESENT AND FUTURE, WHICH WOULD PERMIT THE SECRETARY TO ATTEND THE JUNE OAS ASSEMBLY WITHOUT EMBARRASSMENT; HELP TO REVERSE THE PROGRESSIVE DETERIORATION IN US-CHILEAN RELATIONS; AND PROVIDE A POSSIBLE PRECEDENT FOR IMPROVING HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

3. ONE ALTERNATIVE POSSIBILITY WOULD BE TO ENCOURAGE ORFILA TO SET UP AN AD HOC OAS WORKING GROUP OF QUALIFIED PERSONS TO DO THE JOB WE HAD ENVISAGED FOR THE COMMISSION. PROVIDED OAS PROCEDURES ARE SUFFICIENTLY FLEXIBLE TO PERMIT THIS, ORFILA COULD URGE THE GOC TO ACCEPT SUCH A GROUP DURING HIS IMPENDING VISIT HERE. WE COULD SUPPORT HIM AS APPROPRIATE.

4. A LESS DESIRABLE ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE TO ASSUME A MORE ACTIVE ROLE OURSELVES. THIS WOULD ENTAIL URGING THE CHILEANS TO TAKE SIGNIFICANT STEPS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AREA WITHIN THE NEXT THREE MONTHS, AND MONITORING THEIR PROGRESS. GIVEN THE PRESENT CHILEAN SENSITIVITIES, IT WOULD BE A DELICATE TASK, RESENTED AS INTERVENTIONIST AND AS INCOMPATIBLE WITH CHILE'S SOVEREIGN DIGNITY. THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS WOULD BE UNCERTAIN, IN PART BECAUSE THE FIRMNESS OF OUR RESOLVE WOULD BE QUESTIONED (SEPTTEL). BUT IF ALL OTHER ROADS WERE CLOSED AND IT CAME TO A CHOICE BETWEEN A UNILATERAL DEMARCHE AND INACTION, WE WOULD BE WILLING TO MAKE THE PITCH -- PROVIDED THE DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS THE MATTER SUFFICIENTLY IMPORTANT. THE FIRST MOVE COULD BE MADE EITHER IN WASHINGTON OR HERE, OR IN BOTH PLACES SIMULTANEOUSLY.

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